DC500 Troubleshooting Updates February 2, 2006

Q – My battery does not last long and runs out after only one dive or about 50 pictures.

A – The DC500 uses the most powerful lithium rechargeable battery available. With a freshly charged battery, you should get about 1.5 hours of use or about 100 pictures with proper power management. Here are some tips to maximize battery life:

1. Make sure that you initially charge the battery overnight (minimum 8 hours). Then the battery must be fully discharged through normal use prior to the next complete charge. This only needs to be done the first time the battery is charged.
2. Set the power save setting (sleep mode) from 2 minutes to 30seconds. This setting is located under the set-up mode menu. The camera will go to sleep in 30 seconds and preserve battery power. Push any button to wake up the camera. The camera will turn off in 3 minutes if no buttons are pushed. Press the power button to turn on the camera.
3. Using the Shark mode will save battery power.
4. Keep the camera power off as much as possible.
5. Purchase a spare battery as a back-up – Item # SL15134.

Q – Can I use a 1GB or 2GB SD memory card with the DC500?

A – We recommend a maximum memory size of 512mb made by Sandisk, Toshiba or Panasonic. Larger memory size and other brands may work fine, but we can not guarantee their compatibility with the DC500 camera. In some cases, we know that a 1GB or 2GB memory card can cause the camera to react slowly during powering on the camera and increase the recycle time between taking pictures, especially while the camera is set to TIFF image format.

Q – How can I get the DC500 video clip will not play on my MAC computer?

A – The Windows Media Player for MAC appears to have some bugs, that Microsoft is trying to fix. We found another media player that plays .asf file on MAC computers. It is available for free download here: http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/14738

Q –What can cause the DC500 metal parts to rust?

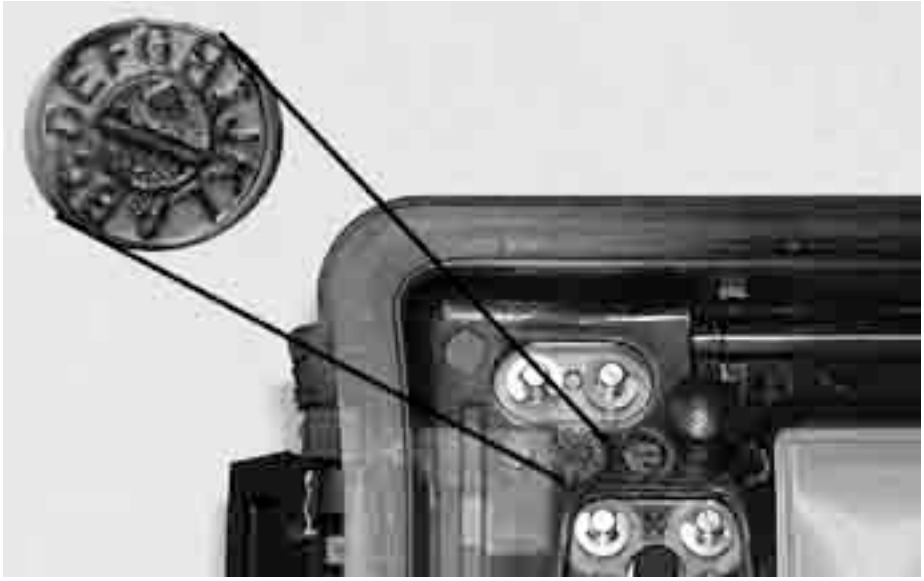
A – The DC500 uses 316 stainless steel metal hardware, which is the best type of stainless steel available for use in saltwater and marine environment. The rust that you see is only on the surface and caused by other metals that have contacted and contaminated the 316 stainless steel. It can be easily wipe off with a clean moist cloth. It is important that you keep the stainless steel hardware clean and dry to prevent rust stains from forming. A great source for information on stainless steel is http://www.ssina.com/knowledgebase/..

Q – The stainless steel plate on the front of the housing looks dull and has imperfections.

A – Most likely, the protective film is still on the stainless steel plate. The camera comes with a clear protective film to protect the metal part from scratches. Remove the film and remember to clean off the camera with fresh water after every dive and allow it to dry completely before storage.

Q – The shutter button on DC500 seems difficult to push or does not even work sometimes.

A – Open the housing and check the housing production lot code.



IF the date code is A through J, check to see that the two black rubber caps are in place. Without these in place the camera is not sitting properly and out of reach of the shutter button. If any of the rubber caps are missing, SeaLife can ship out a new rubber caps that the consumer can replace (Item# SL11052).

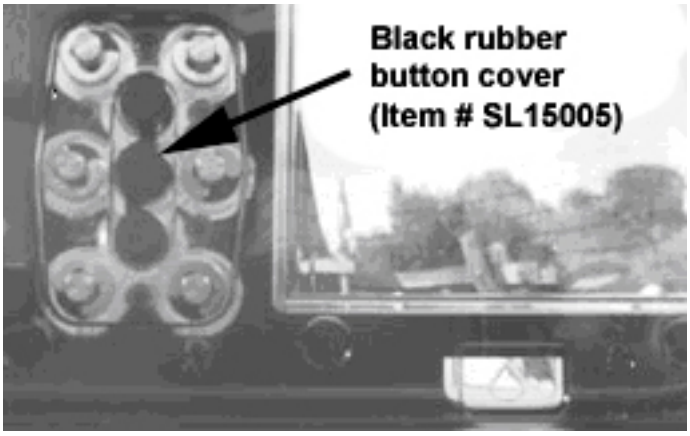
IF the date code is equal to K or greater, the black rubber caps are not necessary.

Other possible answer(s):
The shutter button on the housing should only require about 3 pounds of force to activate. Gently press and hold the shutter button, and never push with excessive force. The camera will not take a picture no matter how hard you push the shutter IF the flash is not fully charged. Practice pushing the shutter button gently and get a feel for the amount of pressure required to activate the shutter.

If you are still experiencing any issues with the shutter button, please contact the SeaLife service center.

Q – Some of the buttons on the back of the housing do not reach the inner camera:

A – Three of the navigational buttons on the back of the housing require a black rubber button cover (item # SL15005), as shown in the picture below. If this button cover is missing, please contact your local authorized SeaLife dealer or contact SeaLife Customer Service.



Q –The Flash Link Adapter keeps popping off, when using TWO strobes,

A – The Flash Link adapter grabs around the lens port but can be pulled off under excessive stress. To avoid this it is important to feed the Flash Link cables up from under the camera and up into the adapter, so the cable is relaxed and not pulling on the adapter. It may also help to the cable to the flash arm using with a low-profile zip tie to keep firmly in position.

Q – Camera has no power

A – Make sure the battery is inserted correctly into the camera. There is a small sticker inside the battery compartment to show the correct way to insert the battery. Also make sure that the battery has been completely charged.

Q – I have lost the little Allen wrench tool to tighten the screws on my DC500 Flash Link adapter.

A – We do not stock this part but the tool is available at most hardware stores. Ask for either a 1/16" (1.5mm) Allen wrench.

Q – Pictures are out of focus.

A – There are many factors that may affect the auto focus system. The camera's auto focus range is 2.4" (6cm) to infinity. Here are some tips to ensure a sharp focus:

1. For macro shots within 2.4"(6cm) to 14" (35cm) the camera must be set to:
    a. For land pictures, set the camera Scene mode (SCN button) to Macro.
    b. For underwater pictures, set the camera Scene mode (SCN button) to Sea or External Flash.
    c. Enable Shark mode.

2. The camera will set the focus on the subject located in the center of the picture. Align the square located in the center of the LCD over the subject. Subjects outside this square may not be in focus if they are closer or farther away. The depth of field for close-up pictures is only a few inches.
3. The camera's auto focus system needs light to "see" the subject. In darkness, the camera uses the red focusing light located next to the camera's flash to illuminate the subject. You can also use another light source, like an underwater flash light, to illuminate the subject.
4. When you push the shutter button _ way, the camera will set the focus and exposure on the subject. The focusing square in the center of the LCD will be blue if the camera has accurately determined the correct shooting distance. If this square is yellow, the camera may not be certain of the exact shooting distance and will use a best estimate.
5. The Shark mode has been enabled but the shooting distance has changed. To correctly use the Shark mode, aim the camera at the subject and push the OK button. The camera will lock the focus on the subject. A Shark icon will appear on the LCD indicating the Shark mode is enabled. If you change your shooting distance, you must reset the Shark mode. Push the OK button again to disable the Shark mode.
6. Update the camera firmware to version 107 PIE3. This is available for free download on our website – www.sealife-cameras.com. The new FW will improve the camera's ability to focus on close-up objects (between 2.4" to 10") when set to SEA or EXT FLASH mode.

Q – The DC500 camera does not easily attach to the SeaLife Flash accessory.

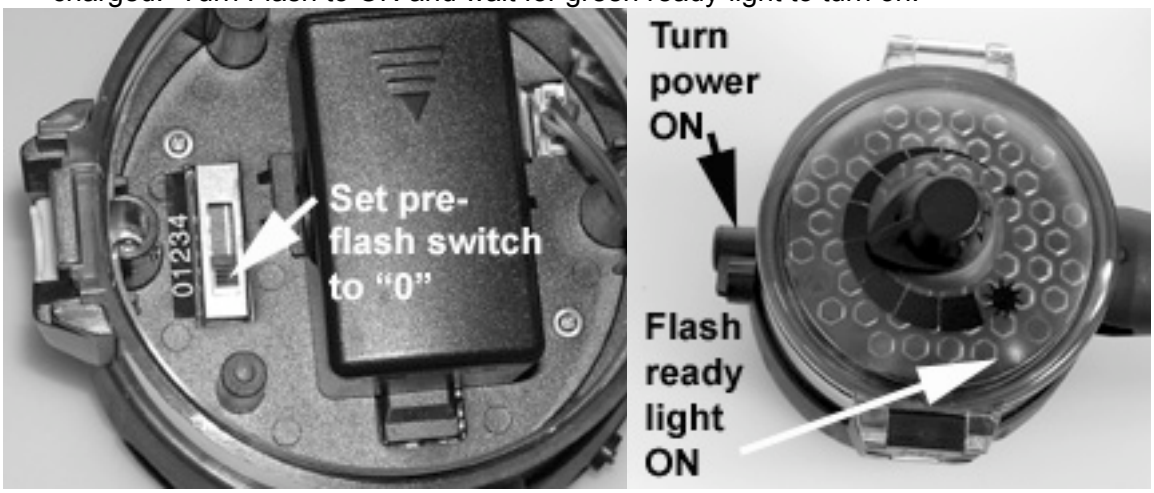
A – Make sure to remove the original flash deflector from the flash base (See picture below). The DC500 uses the Flash Link adapter and optical cable to fire the External Flash. The deflector attached to the flash base is used for other SeaLife camera models.

Q – The SeaLife Flash does not fire AT ALL when connected to my DC500.

A – There are a few important steps that will ensure the External Flash fires:

1. Set DC500 camera to Ext Flash mode.

2. Set Digital Flash Pre-Flash switch to “0”. Make sure Camera and External Flash batteries are fully charged. Turn Flash to ON and wait for green ready-light to turn on.

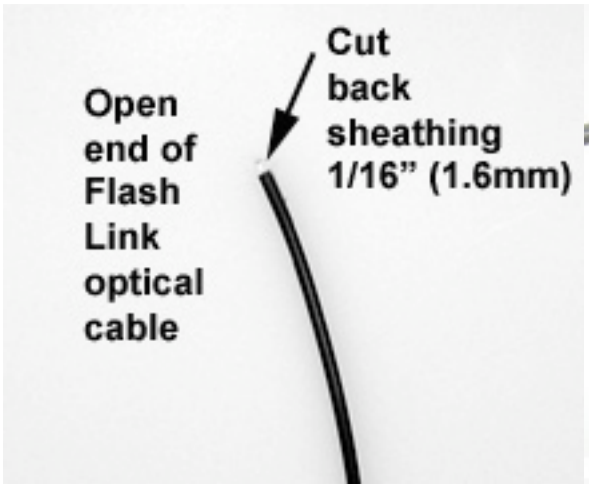


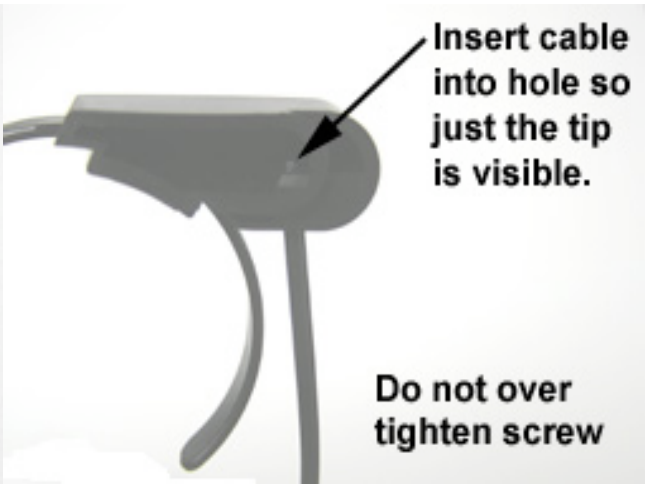
3. Here’s an easy test to make sure the External Flash is firing and synchronized with the camera. Take a picture of the External Flash, pointing the camera at the flash sensor. Do this with the camera removed from the flash base and without the Flash Link optical cable connected. The picture should show the flash firing. If you do not see the flash firing in the picture make sure you followed the set-up step #1 defined above.

Q – The SeaLife Flash fires sometimes, but frequently misfires when connected to my DC500.

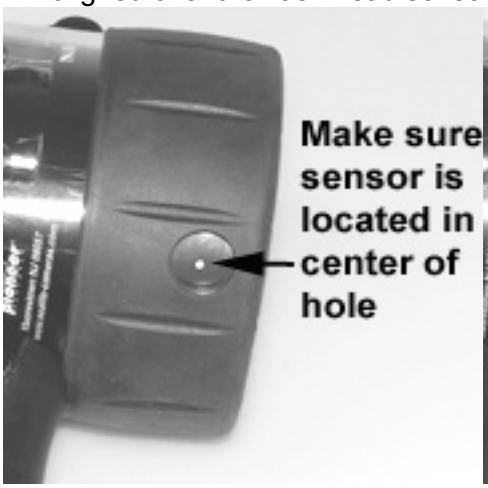
A – Here are is an important update and some tips to make sure the flash fires all the time:

1. Check that the DC500 camera has the latest firmware installed. It should be version 107 PIE 5 or greater. This firmware increases the intensity of the camera’s flash and delivers more light to the flash sensor.
    a. To determine what version firmware is installed on your camera, turn the camera power on. Push the MODE button and select the SET-UP option. Select the CUSTOM tab on the top. Select the bottom right icon called “firmware”
    b. For instructions on how to download a free copy of the latest firmware, please visit the SeaLife website - http://www.sealife-cameras.com/service/firmware.html.
2. Make sure the Flash Link optical cable is properly connected. The DC500 camera comes with the Flash Link Adapter, but does not include the Flash Link optical cable (item # SL962). The optical cable is included with combinations sets, like the DC500 ProSet, the Digital Flash or can be purchased separately at your local dive dealer.
    c. Attach the optical cable to the DC500 Flash Link adapter. Insert the open end of the cable into the Flash Link Adapter so only the tip of the cable sticks out. Do not push the cable in too far into the hole so it touches the roof of the adapter





d. Slowly tighten the screw in _ turn increments using the Allen wrench provided. Pull on the cable after every _ turn until it's secure. Be very careful not to over tighten the screw or you will damage the cable. If you think you may have over-tightened the screw, loosen the screw and inspect the cable. If the cable is crushed, cut off the end of the cable with a razor blade and remove about 1/16" (1.6mm) of the black sheathing.
e. Attach the Flash Head Adapter to the External Flash. First, make sure that the small flash sensor is centered in the hole. If not, rotate the rubber sleeve until the sensor is centered. Attach the Flash Sensor Adapter by inserting into the hole in the rubber sleeve. Make sure the adapter is centered in the hole. It is very important that the Flash Sensor Adapter is aligned over the flash head sensor or the flash will not fire.

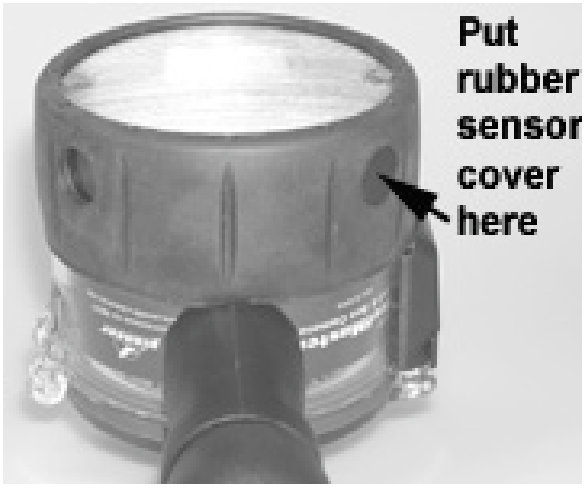


f. Wrap the Flash Link cable around the top of the flash arm to minimize movement while underwater. Clip the DC500 Flash Link Adapter onto the camera housing lens port. When attaching two cables to the Flash Link Adapter, it may be necessary to secure the Adapter to the housing with a small zip-tie or black rubber band so it stays securely attached to the housing during use. You may also consider securing cable to the flash arm using a low-profile zip tie as shown below.

Secure cable around flash arm

or, secure cable to arm using a zip tie

g. Don't forget to insert black rubber sensor cover over flash sensor located farthest from the camera.



h. Take a few test pictures to make sure the External Flash fires.

i. If you still experience a flash firing issue after reviewing the above information, please send the camera system to the SeaLife Service department for a complete evaluation

Q – A "card error" message appears on the LCD after powering on the camera

A – Most likely is that the SD memory card is not completely inserted into the memory card slot. Make sure the card is pushed all the way into the slot until it clicks and locks in place. The other possibility is that the memory card is damaged or dirty. Check to make sure contacts on the card are clean. Also check that there is no debris lodged in the memory card slot. Blow or shake-out any dirt or debris in the memory card slot. Do not stick any object into the memory card slot – this can damage the camera. If you are still experiencing a card error message, replace the memory card.

Q – My camera locks-up and the only way to unlock it is by removing the battery.

A – If your camera locks-up, please do the following:

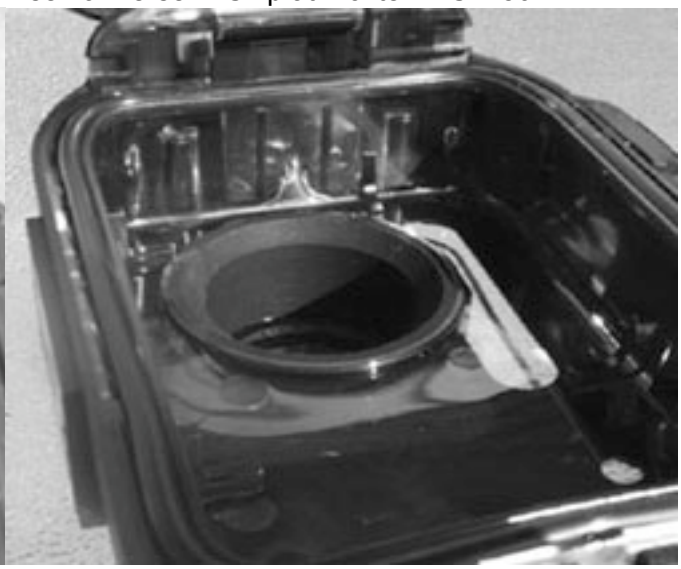
1) Make sure you are using an approved SD memory card – Sandisk, Panasonic or Toshiba with memory size up to 512mb.
2) Check the SeaLife website for the latest firmware upgrade. This is available for free download on our website – www.sealife-cameras.com. This new FW will correct lock-up issue when the camera is set to TIFF image format.

3) Format the camera's internal memory and SD memory card. The Format function is located in Set-Up mode menu.
4) Report the camera lock-up issue to the SeaLife Service center. Email: service@sealife-cameras.com.

Q – The black rubber tube ring (flashguard) in the lens port area comes out. Is this normal?

A – Yes, this part is designed to be removed for easy cleaning of the housing lens. This is the flashguard that prevents the inner camera's flash from reaching the lens and causing glare. This should be placed back into the lens port area so it's completely seated. If this part falls out frequently, SeaLife can ship out a newer flashguard that the consumer can replace himself or herself. Ship at n/c Item# SL15014

Flashguard out of position



Flashguard completely seated

Q – Is it recommended to use the SeaLife 3X, 8X or 16X lens with the DC500 camera?

A – No. The SeaLife close-up lenses may fit the DC500, but does not offer any real benefit. The close-up lenses are design for our fixed focus film and digital cameras. The DC500 uses and auto focus system to focus from 2.5" to infinity, so the lenses are not required to get the picture in focus. Some DC500 customers that use the close-up lens say it helps the camera to focus quicker. On the downside, we have seen the lens cause a glare "ring" that shows up in the picture. SeaLife does not recommend using any of the close-up lenses with the DC500.